**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

The following listing of claims replaces all previous versions and listings of claims in this application.

Claims 1. to 9. (Cancelled Herein)

10. (Currently Amended) A hypocholesterolaemic agent ~~obtainable by the process of claim 1 and being~~ rich in oxygenated natural derivatives of lanosterol and being obtainable by a process which comprises:

steeping an edible fungus in a first solvent under temperature and time conditions effective to extract an active fraction in a liquid phase,

separating the liquid phase from solid materials,

obtaining a dry extract of the active fraction from the liquid phase,

forming an aqueous phase of the dry extract and water,

contacting the aqueous phase with a second solvent that has a lower polarity than the first solvent and that is immiscible with water, with the contacting conducted under conditions sufficient to extract the active fraction in an organic phase,

separating the organic phase from the aqueous phase, and

obtaining the active fraction recovered from the organic phase as the hypocholesterolaemic agent.

11. (Currently Amended) An edible composition for inhibiting synthesis of cholesterol in a person comprising a food or beverage and the hypocholesterolaemic agent of claim [[11]] 10 in an effective amount therein.

12. (Original) A method for inhibiting synthesis of cholesterol which comprises administering to a person in need of such treatment the hypocholesterolaemic agent of claim 11 in an effective amount thereof.

13. (Original) A method for inhibiting synthesis of cholesterol which comprises administering to a person in need of such treatment a food or beverage containing the hypocholesterolaemic agent of claim 11 in an effective amount therein.

14. (New) The hypocholesterolaemic agent of claim 10, wherein the fungi are *Agaricalles*, *Aphyllophorales* or *Stereales*.

15. (New) The hypocholesterolaemic agent of claim 10, wherein the fungi are one or more of *Pleurotus eryngii*, *Pleurotus eous*, *Ganoderma lucidum*, *Grifola frondosa*, *Pleurotus ostreatus*, *Agrocybe aegerita*, *Pholiota nameko*, *Pleurotus citrinopileatus* or *Flamulina velutipes*.

16. (New) The hypocholesterolaemic agent of claim 10, wherein the steeping is carried out for 4 to 96 hours at a temperature of between 5 and 30°C.

17. (New) The hypocholesterolaemic agent of claim 10, wherein the dry extract is obtained by evaporating the liquid phase.

18. (New) The hypocholesterolaemic agent of claim 10, wherein the first solvent is methanol, ethanol, chloroform, or a mixture thereof.

19. (New) The hypocholesterolaemic agent of claim 10, wherein the second solvent is ethyl acetate, isopropanol, chloroform or a mixture thereof.

20. (New) The hypocholesterolaemic agent of claim 10, wherein the process further comprises adjusting the pH of the aqueous phase to a value of between 2 and 5 before the extraction with the second solvent.

21. (New) The hypocholesterolaemic agent of claim 10, wherein the contacting is carried out by repeated washings of the aqueous phase.

22. (New) The hypocholesterolaemic agent of claim 10, wherein an amount of extract of from 1 to less that 14 μg/ml of the extract results in a lowering of cholesterol synthesis by 50% when in contact with human hepatic cells *in vivo*.

23. (New) The hypocholesterolaemic agent of claim 22, wherein the extract is obtained from the fungi *Ganoderma lucidum*, *Pleurotus citrinopileatus* or *Flamulina velutipes*.

24. (New) An edible composition for inhibiting synthesis of cholesterol in a person comprising a food or beverage and the hypocholesterolaemic agent of claim 22 in an effective amount therein.

25. (New) A method for inhibiting synthesis of cholesterol which comprises administering to a person in need of such treatment the hypocholesterolaemic agent of claim 22 in an effective amount thereof.

26. (New) A method for inhibiting synthesis of cholesterol which comprises administering to a person in need of such treatment a food or beverage containing the hypocholesterolaemic agent of claim 22 in an effective amount therein.